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## Elbow Dysplasia

### Issue Description

*Elbow dysplasia is a condition involving multiple developmental abnormalities of the elbow-joint. It is a common condition of certain breeds of dogs. Most developmental elbow abnormalities are related to osteochondrosis (OCD), which is a disease of the joint cartilage. Osteochondritis dissecans refers to separation of a flap of cartilage on the joint surface.*

### Symptoms

OCD lesions are found in the elbow at the medial epicondyle of the humerus. Specific conditions related to OCD include fragmentation of the medial coronoid process of the ulna (FMCP) and an ununited anconeal process of the ulna (UAP). All types of OCD of the elbow are most typically found in large breed dogs, with symptoms starting between the ages of 4 to 8 months.[1] Males are affected twice as often as females. The disease often affects both elbows (30 to 70 percent of the time), and symptoms include intermittent lameness, joint swelling, and external rotation and abduction of the paw.[2] Osteoarthritis will develop later in most cases.

### Diagnosis and Treatment

Diagnosis is through x-rays and arthroscopy. In cases with significant lameness, surgery is the best option, especially with UAP. However, conservative treatment is often enough for cases of FMCP and OCD of the medial humeral epicondyle. The dogs are exercised regularly and given pain medication, and between the ages of 12 to 18 months the lameness will often improve or disappear. Control of body weight is important in all cases of elbow dysplasia, and prevention of quick growth spurts in puppies may help to prevent the disease. Surgery for FMCP consists of removal of cartilage and bone fragments and correction of any incongruity of the joint. Reattachment of UAP with a screw is usually attempted before the age of 24 weeks, and after that age the typical treatment is removal of the UAP. Without surgery, UAP rapidly progresses to osteoarthritis, but with FMCP osteoarthritis typically occurs with or without surgery. Osteoarthritis is also a common sequela of OCD of the humerus despite medical or surgical treatment. Elbow replacement surgery has been developed and can be an option for treatment.

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals in the United States will grade elbow X-rays of dogs intended for breeding.

### Commonly affected breeds

#### UAP

- German Shepherd Dog
- Labrador Retriever
- Basset Hound
- Newfoundland
- Shar Pei
- Chow Chow
- English Setter
- Golden Retriever
- Mastiff
- Pomeranian
- Rottweiler
- Saint Bernard

## FMCP

- Basset Hound
- Bouvier des Flandres
- Bullmastiff
- Chow Chow
- German Shepherd Dog
- Golden Retriever
- Gordon Setter
- Irish Wolfhound
- Labrador Retriever
- Mastiff
- Newfoundland
- Rottweiler
- Saint Bernard

## OCD of the medial humeral epicondyle

- Labrador Retriever
- Chow Chow
- German Shepherd Dog
- Golden Retriever
- Great Dane
- Labrador Retriever
- Newfoundland
- Rottweiler

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